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TES/26.11/76

£500,000 crash in student travel

by Stephen Cohen

Two hundred full-time employees of the National Union of Students face Christmas on the dole. The union has been wound up by its service companies, including the large NUS Travel Service, with losses of more than £500,000.

Fifty members of the National Graphical Association were made redundant from Sirago and Blackwell (Photomech) Ltd, the union's Cheltenham based printing company. Endsleigh Printing Services Ltd, the London print shop, has also ceased trading. But most of the redundancies are from the travel firm.

Both printing companies had losses of about £100,000. The major creditor of NUS Travel is British Rail which is thought to be owed about £250,000 as part of the cut price rail fares scheme. Under this students have bought identity cards for £6.50 entitling them to half fares on many routes, but the union has not reimbursed British Rail. Mr Charles Clarke, NUS president, said last week that the discount scheme would remain valid until cards expired.

Up to May this year the travel company had accumulated losses of £420,000. It was the biggest student travel company in the world in 1974 about 190,000 students used it. But it has never managed to make money in recent years. Mr Mike Naylor, the £15,000 a year managing director, said last week that when he took over the job in 1972 it was already losing money. "I was asked to get it out of loss," he said. "The problem was insuperable. It is a high risk business."

None of the 80 or 90 students now about will be stranded. About 5,000 students have booked holidays for Christmas and negotiations are taking place to ensure that they will be able to travel. A spokesman for the travel firm said most would go on holiday. Those who could not would be reimbursed from the bonding and protection funds.

Mr Clarke said the companies had been wound up because the union was not prepared to place its assets at risk. The liquidation would not affect the union's annual subscription income of just over £500,000.

Mr Clarke said the collapse was due to a number of factors. The buying power of students had declined rapidly in the past two years. The lack of vacation employment and the lower value of grants had meant that fewer students were travelling overseas on holiday. The declining value of the pound had also reduced the number of students able to travel. The increased size of the company had created administrative and structural difficulties which we have not dealt with quickly enough to meet the rapidly changing circumstances which we face."

The future of the 45 travel offices on college and university campuses has yet to be decided. They could remain in business offering holidays from other major travel firms and talks are to be held between the union and the



Closed doors at NUS travel centre on Victoria Station this week.

ference and the Student Air Travel Association. The Australian students' travel company is also interested.

A 24-hour emergency telephone service for passengers and customers has been set up on 01-357 9456. Mr Clarke said the number was also available for companies which wanted to offer jobs to the redundant employees.

The union's other major company, Endsleigh Insurance, stays in business. Mr Clarke said it continued to be profitable and was heading for a £1,400,000 turnover this year. The discount trading scheme would be abandoned.

The resignation of the union's executive committee was announced at the NUS conference in Blackpool last month. An emergency debate on the service companies will be held on the first evening of the conference.

Mr Mike Forsythe, chairman of the Federation of Conservative Students, said this week that he would like to see the resignation of Mr Clarke and Mr David Forsythe, a vice-president in charge of services. "They must go," he said.

"Every single member of the executive will have to justify his existence." Mr Forsythe said the FCS had entered negotiations with "interested parties" to set up a new student travel organization. The most important priority was to provide a travel service. The second priority was to ensure that students realized the value of a national union. In return for FCS support in keeping the union together, Forsythe expected concessions from the ruling left-wing groups.

All delegates to the conference must be elected by trans-campus secret ballot, he said. "There has also to be a right to contract out of membership. In future we will give our commitment to a national union and will campaign against disaffiliation. It's not a deal on our part. It's an ultimatum."

About 200 Conservative students are expected in Blackpool next

Left wing holds meeting to form new Alliance

A new coalition of left-wing teachers was formed at the weekend after a conference in London. The Socialist Teachers' Alliance was born after a split in Rank and File, the left-wing group within the National Union of Teachers.

The alliance has about 240 members, but intends to recruit widely. Groups within the organization include Labour Party supporters, International Marxists, Workers' League, Workers' Power Teachers' Fraction, International Communist League and the Anarchist Workers' Group.

The conference agreed on a resolution which had, as one of its major aims, a demand for a national effort to defend and improve the education service and teachers' working conditions.

The group was formed because it was felt there was no organization for teachers within which socialists could work together without conflict. Rank and File was said to have become dominated by the International Socialists who, although present at the conference,

are not represented on the coordinating committee.

Mr Dave Pickett, an anti-unionist, said the conference was a "new, more drastic, new situation".

Resistance to the conference would place teachers on the defensive for year or two. But the war for further advance against all cuts, not just tuition. I am convinced for unity with other groups.

Teachers had to call for greater union and the regular election of officials. Local socialists should be given political issues within the union.

'Gross sex discrimination' over grants and courses

There is more discrimination against women in further and higher education than in any other sector, said Dr Eileen Byrne, education officer of the Equal Opportunities Commission, at the weekend.

She told a "day school" on women's rights organized by the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education at Kingsway - Princeton FE College, London: "We propose to indulge in decisive break-in strategies next year."

Student awards was an area of "gross discrimination", she said. There was also discrimination against women in the choice of courses. "We have heard of women who wanted to do a motor vehicle course but couldn't because the interviewers did not think she could cope." The commission had also received complaints from boys who were prevented from doing commerce or beauty therapy.

The EOC was handling the case of a married woman who applied for a grant to do O and A levels as a prelude to a higher level course. She had a disabled husband

and she worked. The authority had a policy of awards for courses done in local schools.

"We are saying it is unacceptable and going into 1981, with Dr Byrne said, she applied for an admission to the North of England asked: "What would a site foreman have replied: 'I would get the job, as well as the ample of scolding. She was concerned the declining number of training days for two years ago women."

Wherever there had been kind of reorganization, 38 per cent of the women were women, now 18 per cent and steadily.

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Comprehensive law slips in

The 1976 Education Bill to make all state schools go comprehensive became law this week. The Lords, who had earlier insisted on amendments, backed down from a confrontation with the House of Commons over it.

The Education Secretary, Mrs Shirley Williams, is now expected to waste no time before making a statement welcoming its passage and giving details about how it is to be implemented.

The first step will be to write to the eight rebel authorities who have so far refused to submit any plans for reorganization. The second is likely to be to issue a circular. The Secretary of State will need to know, for example, what I.E.A.s are doing about taking up places in independent schools. From now on, they need her approval to do this and will have to submit details to her.

In its final form the new law differs little from the bill introduced in the House of Commons a year ago.

Only three changes have been made. The first was introduced in the spring as a result of pressure from the Inner London Education Authority, for example, and a few other I.E.A.s who use banding to stop slink schools developing. It allows authorities to continue to control admissions on the basis of ability if "the purpose of the arrangements is to secure the even distribution between schools of pupils of different degrees of ability or aptitude".

The second change was a new clause concerning handicapped children. This clause, inserted during the debate in the Lords, shifts the emphasis in placing handicapped children from special schools to ordinary schools.

The third change, a minor one put in last week, requires the Secretary of State to give reasons for rejecting reorganization proposals. It was an amendment put down by the Liberals in the Lords which the Government accepted.

Minister lists colleges to close

Mr Oakes, Minister of State for Education, listed the colleges of education which the DES had decided to close.

These were: Alnwick (396 places); Darlington (450); Middleton St George (720); Wentworth Castle (300); Sedgley Park (600); Radbrook (110); St Peter's, Salford (650); St Paul's, Rugby (540); Horwford (650); Mary Ward (540); Kesteven (570); Maria Assumpta (465); Coloma (700); Salford Walden (350); Hockwill (500); Stungbourne (370); Culham (570); Surin St Michael (510).

The Secretary of State, he added, would come to a final decision about further reductions when she had considered the advice of the Advisory Committee and any other representations which might be made to her.

To Mr Keith Hampson (Ripon, C), Mr Oakes said that closure of a college could not normally be completed within less than four years from the date of decision. Many of the colleges which would need to be closed would not become vacant until after 1981. The disposal or alternative use of premises was a matter for the maintaining authority or voluntary providing body.

Comprehensives: Miss Margaret Jackson, Education Under Secretary, said that by October 1976, 22 I.E.A.s in England had completely abolished selection for secondary education. In a further 19, reorganization was complete except for voluntary schools.

O-levels: Miss Margaret Jackson, Under Secretary, in a written reply, said CCE O-level entries and passes by subjects is published in Volume two of the Department's "Statistics of Education". The latest volume was for 1974. The figures for the most popular 12 subjects in the CCE O level examination in summer 1975 were as follows:

Subject	Entries	Grades A-C	A-C as % of entries
English	223,023	245,010	81.2
Mathematics	241,381	177,010	73.3
Science	201,381	150,010	74.5
Geography	182,339	103,662	57.7
French	131,441	91,813	69.9
History	142,441	83,747	58.8
Physics	130,189	78,577	60.3
Chemistry	107,532	66,229	61.6
Art	92,831	48,917	52.7
Religion	58,992	34,441	58.4
Latin	56,664	30,441	53.7

1975 was the first year that Examining Boards officially introduced grades in the GCE O-level examination. Grade A to C were equivalent to a pass under the O-level system prevailing before 1975.

Research facts contradict racist 'lies'

The "lies and half-truths" being put about by right wing politicians and newspapers suggest that black people are a threat to the British way of life contradict the facts, says a Labour Research Department pamphlet.

The black population is only 3.2 per cent of the total population and immigration has been reduced to a trickle. Because of the small number of blacks and their age structure, they are only a tiny burden on the social services.

Far from increasing the country's housing difficulties, black people are more likely than any other section of society to suffer from the housing shortage, and a far smaller proportion of them are unemployed. The facts are published in a pamphlet, "The Black Community in Britain", published last week.

Black people are no more likely to be unemployed than the rest of the population. The idea that all blacks are living on unemployment benefits is a myth. When unemployed, they are less likely to get a job. They cannot therefore be accused of taking white people's jobs away, it says.

Black children do cause problems in schools, but they are the same as language difficulties. There is no more temporary. The common basis for the common assumption that black people are a threat to the British way of life is the facts. Labour Research Department, 87, Fleet Street, London EC4A 3DF.

New unit set up in DES staff reshuffle

Mr Edward Simpson has been appointed deputy secretary in command, in a major reshuffle of senior officials at the Department of Education and Science. Mr Simpson, who is responsible for higher education, will bring responsibility for teacher education, branches, statistics and the department's economic unit.

He will also be in charge of a new unit headed by Mr John Hudson, a chief inspector who will manage the department's planning as well as linking the inspection unit in educational research with the planning unit.

Mr Simpson, who is responsible for higher education, will bring responsibility for teacher education, branches, statistics and the department's economic unit.

Mr Alan Thompson, formerly responsible for construction, has been promoted to deputy secretary in the Civil Service. It is the first time three areas have been brought under one deputy secretary. Mr Thompson, formerly responsible for construction, has been promoted to deputy secretary in the Civil Service. It is the first time three areas have been brought under one deputy secretary.

Head cleared of sex with his star pupil

A Survey head who was charged six years ago by his pupils for having an illicit relationship with his 18-year-old pupil has been cleared by an inquiry of having any sexual contact on her.

Mr Michael Underhill, O.C. in his report published last week by the Longfield School of Archbishop Langton, London, England Secondary School, was generally trying to help a girl whom he regarded as a school's only potential entrant.

But the wholly disproportionate attention he lavished on her, bound to alarm her father, complained to the Ombudsman, who cleared the head for his part in the matter.

By giving her private lessons, driving her to and from school, and giving her a place in the Cambridge and driving her to and from school, Dr Longfield-Jones was clearly giving her special attention.

The girl, who is now 24, told the inquiry that her relationship was not sexual. She regarded Dr Longfield-Jones as a friend and her father was not happy about it.

The governors of the school did not consider Mr Dr Longfield-Jones' conduct as a head teacher and he stayed on as head teacher for a year. In their report, the governors said they were "deeply shocked" by the conduct of the head teacher and his relationship with the staff and pupils. The reputation of the school had suffered.

Mr Underhill's report was considered by Surrey County Council's special purposes committee. Mr Dennis Smith, father of the girl, refused to accept the report. He said he would continue to demand a public inquiry.

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Speakers include Shirley Williams, Lord Wolfenden, Judith Hart, Len Murray, Edward Heath, Sir Harold Wilson, Sean McBride, Roy Shaw, Patricia Hewitt, Pauline Crabbe and Margaret Maden.

This is the official opening event of the Wembley Conference Centre. The conference will be of particular value to community workers, training and personnel officers, youth counsellors, administrators and current affairs and careers teachers. Special hotel and travel rates for delegates. A limited number of bursaries is available.

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YOUTH CHARTER towards 2000

Oxbridge awards for 1975-76

TABLE 1

School	OPEN AWARDS				RESTRICTED AWARDS			
	Scholarships	Exhibitions	Scholarships	Exhibitions	Scholarships	Exhibitions	Scholarships	Exhibitions
M	90	115	134	132	21	18	6	17
DC	121	126	134	132	11	13	2	8
C	68	84	72	72	5	3	—	—
O	2	5	1	6	—	—	—	—
Total	310	360	260	400	41	42	8	27

M=Maintained or Aided Secondary Grammar School. I=Independent School. DC=Direct Grant School. C=Comprehensive School. O=Overseas School. Other University and Tutorial Establishments.

TABLE 2

SCHOOL	Post 'O' level students Sept. 1975				Post 'O' level students Sept. 1975			
	Men	Women	Schools	Exhibitions	Men	Women	Schools	Exhibitions
Manchester G.S.	501	—	6	8	135	—	1	2
Eton College	621	—	11	5	10	—	2	2
Winchester College	380	—	1	10	175	—	1	1
Imberdons AS&C, Elysee	314	—	1	1	10	—	1	1
St. Paul's	369	—	1	1	6	—	2	2
Hatfield G.S.	348	—	1	7	1	—	1	1
Dulwich College	450	—	5	6	5	—	1	1
King Edward's School, Birmingham	215	—	6	4	6	—	2	2
Briscoland School	240	—	6	5	4	—	1	1
Bundie	130	—	1	8	4	—	1	1
Lutwyche Upper	351	—	1	2	9	—	1	1
Chorley's Hospital, Hants	238	—	1	1	2	—	1	1
Seventon	122	—	1	1	8	—	1	1
King's College S., Wiltshire	276	—	1	2	6	—	1	1
Nottingham High School	250	—	1	1	9	—	1	1
Reddy	390	—	1	2	3	—	1	1
Sturminster	279	—	1	2	3	—	1	1
King Edward VI S., Southampton	242	—	4	1	3	—	1	1
Newcastle Royal G.S.	300	—	1	1	1	—	1	1
Brentwood	302	—	1	1	1	—	1	1
City of London	252	—	1	1	4	—	1	1
Epsom College	252	—	1	2	2	—	1	1
Merchant Taylors', Northwood	301	—	1	2	4	—	1	1
Shrewsbury	252	—	1	2	4	—	1	1
University College School	215	—	1	2	4	—	1	1
Bristol G.S.	310	—	1	1	3	—	1	1
Clifton College	320	—	1	1	4	—	1	1
High Wycombe Royal G.S.	320	—	1	1	4	—	1	1
King's School, Canterbury	340	—	1	1	2	—	1	1
Tonbridge	280	—	1	1	4	—	1	1
Westminster	271	36	4	1	1	—	1	1
Ampleforth College	280	—	1	1	4	—	1	1
Madelon College Sch., Oxford	164	—	3	2	2	—	1	1
Marlborough College	401	71	2	3	1	—	1	1
Whitgift School, Croydon	242	—	1	1	1	—	1	1
Alroy's School, Dulwich	242	—	1	1	1	—	1	1
Halebury College	254	31	2	1	1	—	1	1
Highgate	240	—	1	1	1	—	1	1
Malvern College	264	—	1	1	1	—	1	1
St. Albans School	245	—	1	1	1	—	1	1
Aylesbury G.S.	210	—	1	1	1	—	1	1
Bedford	262	—	1	1	1	—	1	1
Brasenose	210	—	1	1	1	—	1	1
Dr Challoner's G.S., Amersham	250	—	2	3	1	—	1	1

TABLE 3

SCHOOL	RESTRICTED AWARDS				SCHOOL	RESTRICTED AWARDS			
	Scholarships	Exhibitions	Scholarships	Exhibitions		Scholarships	Exhibitions	Scholarships	Exhibitions
Bradford G.S.	3	2	1	1	Bristol G.S.	1	1	1	1
Manchester G.S.	1	1	1	1	Cranleigh	1	1	1	1
Wykeham	1	1	1	1	Exeter School	1	1	1	1
Marlborough College	2	1	1	1	Leamington	1	1	1	1
Sevenoaks	2	1	1	1	King Edward VI, Southampton	1	1	1	1
St. Paul's	1	1	1	1	King Edward's, Birmingham	1	1	1	1
Westminster	1	1	1	1	King's School, Canterbury	1	1	1	1
Chatterhouse	1	1	1	1	Loughborough G.S.	1	1	1	1
Eton College	1	1	1	1	Malden G.S.	1	1	1	1
Harrow	2	1	1	1	Marling School, Stroud	1	1	1	1
Winchester College	2	1	1	1	Millfield	1	1	1	1
St. George's	1	1	1	1	Newcastle Royal G.S.	1	1	1	1
Clifton College	1	1	1	1	Shrewsbury	1	1	1	1
Leeds G.S.	1	1	1	1	St. Edward's, Oxford	1	1	1	1
Merchant Taylors', Northwood	1	1	1	1	Tonbridge	1	1	1	1
Monkton Combe, Bath	1	1	1	1	Torquay G.S.	1	1	1	1
Abingdon	1	1	1	1	Trinity School, Croydon	1	1	1	1
Ampleforth College	1	1	1	1	Uppingham	1	1	1	1
Bedford	1	1	1	1	Warwick School	1	1	1	1
Birkenhead	1	1	1	1	Whitgift School, Croydon	1	1	1	1
Mandell's, Tiverton	1	1	1	1					

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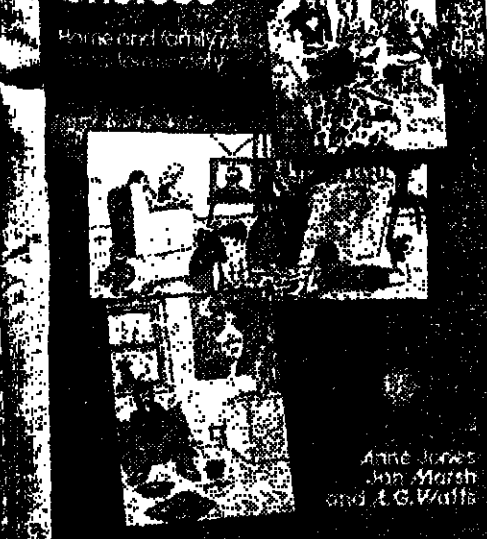
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This course will suit those who wish to widen their practical knowledge and understanding of how the school structure functions (C277/1).

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(c) The Diploma in the Teaching of Handicapped Children: 15th Dec. 1976

(d) The Diploma in the Teaching of Handicapped Children: 15th Dec. 1976

Republic of Ireland
Union urges
child labour
Bill changes

from our correspondent

DUBLIN

Substantial disagreement between

one of the Republic's major trade

unions and the government is hold-

ing up the passage of new legisla-

tion designed to control the

employment of schoolchildren dur-

ing term time.

The legislation—the Protection

of Young Persons (Employment)

Bill—has been stalled in the Senate

for more than a year. It adopts a

new rule of practice for the

employment both of young persons

(those aged between 16 and 18)

and children (those aged between

14 and 15).

While it outlaws, for the first

time, all paid employment of

under-14-year-olds, it also makes

limited provision for the employ-

ment during term time of 14 and

15-year-olds, and it is to this that

the Irish Transport and General

Workers' Union has taken exception.

More than 65,000 young people

in the two age groups concerned

are likely to be affected by the

Bill, discussion of which has given

rise to accusations of the exploita-

tion of child labour. A survey

carried out by members of the

Association of Secondary Teachers

in one large town showed that 18

per cent of their pupils were

employed part-time during term

and were earning on average less

than 50p an hour. Some of them

were working in some cases

as high as 21 hours a week.

Most of the children concerned

are employed in the retail distribu-

tion trade, notably in supermarkets;

some 14 per cent were

employed in public houses, res-

taurants or hotels.

The National Youth Council,

however, is adopting a less strin-

gent approach to the Bill, arguing

that it is necessary to support

the employment of schoolchildren

during term time as long as their

employment does not interfere

with their school activities.

Spokesmen for the ITGWU have

pointed out that the International

Labour Office recommendations,

which the Bill seeks to implement,

were made some 25 years ago.

Soviet Union

Inter-school

physics plan

by John Dunstan

A striking innovation to improve

the quality of physics teaching in

schools has just been authoritatively

announced in the Soviet press. In an

interview published in *Uchitel'skaya*

Gazeta, the teachers' newspaper,

Academician A. Ya. Usikov, chair-

man of the Kharkov Science Centre

of the Ukrainian Academy of

Sciences, has put forward the idea

of setting up inter-school physics

laboratories.

Since the late 1950s there have

been moves to establish a limited

number of special schools and

classes for youngsters showing high

ability in physics and mathematics.

Called "inter-school physics

laboratories", the plan involves

physicists, teachers, and students

co-operating to set up a series of

laboratories in schools, where

physicists, teachers, and students

Common Market
gets its think tank

The EEC's long-awaited
University Institute opened
in Florence last week.
Dalbert Hallenstein
reports.

As Europe struggles to maintain
its unity in the face of increasing
political and economic stress, one
of the first dreams of the founders
of the EEC has finally come into
existence. Last week at Badia Fies-
sole, above Florence, the European
University Institute was opened at
an international ceremony presided
over by Italy's President Giovanni
Leone (TES, November 19).

Situated among olive groves and
cypresses in a fifteenth-century
monastery, within sight of the
domes and towers of Florence, the
institute should become, in the
words of Mr. Rosenstand Hansen,
the president of its council, "a
common market of brains and in-
tellects".

The institute, for postgraduates
only, has three major aims. It
wants to encourage close collabora-
tion between European universities.
"We want to create a new network
between scholars of different back-
grounds, languages and cultures to
co-operate and share our intellectual
resources", said Mr. Max Kohl-
stamm, the Dutchman who is the
institute's principal.

The second aim is to create a
"think tank" of human sciences
related to Europe. Third, the insti-
tute wishes to help break down the
barriers that exist between Euro-
pean universities and the rest of
the world. For this reason, special-
ists in many fields, including poli-
tics and journalism, will be
encouraged to work at the institute.

The institute's general objective,
as expressed in its convention, is
to contribute "to the development
of the cultural and scientific heri-
tage of Europe as a whole and its
constituent parts. Its work should
also be concerned with the great
movements and institutions which
characterize the history and devel-
opment of Europe".

At present the institute has an
academic staff of 14, three from
Britain, and 73 postgraduate re-
search students. Of these 11 are
British and three have been chosen
from non-Common Market countries,
including America, because of the
European relevance of their special-
izations.

Researchers will normally spend
two years in Florence. The insti-
tute's directorate will be recognised
in all EEC countries, but students
are free to present their work to

their own universities in any

material.

The tenure of teachers is

that many may not be able to

their universities for three

is prepared to support

shorter terms. Numerous

teachers will be invited

seminars lasting from a

to several months.

Over the next five or six

it is expected that the

research students will

grow to about 300, while

there will be a steady in-

crease in staff, but the

institute is in no hurry to

expand all it wants to

guarantee the quality of

its programmes, and

prevent research from

becoming a mere

generalized

For law the theme of

protection of human

history department at

integration and on

after 1500. Roman

centre on the consequent

economic interdependence

and social science

students will study

within democratic

The idea of a European

city was first voiced at

Mosina conference in

Treaty of Rome, which

EEC, was worked out

in 1969 that the

began discussing plans

for a postgraduate

signed in 1972. Since

various organizations

battle against

the last of which is

the European

national and

bureaucracies.

Another problem

minor, is that of

are five official

Dutch, French, Italian

and work in each

department in the

most convenient in

Researchers are expected

to work in at least

of languages, but

especially in Italian

the major problem

institute has been

rocking costs. The

modern and complete

is fully computerized

acquire at least 60,000

least five languages,

and because it

drastically deviated

to do this, the library

in Saskatoon, but

agreed that still more

emphasis

should be put on

reading, writing

and arithmetic.

The survey is part of a

project by the University

of Saskatchewan to

identify what goals

general public wanted

for schools (TES, March

19). Dr

Barrie, of the department

of studies, is hoping to

use this kind to develop

that teachers can

adjust school programmes

to fit in

with widely

moderated goals.

All groups questioned

agreed that

basic skills were the

most important.

Next came learning

to get along

and developing life

styles for

developing a sense

of time and

space, and

learning to

examine and

process

information.

One considered least

important

Merits of the mini

The explosive and dangerous Bible

Sir,—The speakers at the conference organized by the Order of Christian Unity (November 12) only present one side of the picture in RE. Little acknowledgment is made of the fact that many RE teachers today are as qualified in their discipline as their colleagues in school subjects. In fact, many former converts have decided to take a degree in theology or religious studies with a view to specializing in RE. Because of inadequate resources in schools RE teachers have spent a great deal of their own money on books, tapes, records and other materials.

Time has been given to the preparation of duplicated notes because textbooks are insufficient or unsuitable, and courses have been cut to make room for holidays, with little or no grant from the education authority.

Dr Rhodes Boyson manages to get in his usual glib about "sociological mish-mash". It does not take a qualification in sociology to make a teacher encourage substitution. Those who have not laboured in the vineyard over the last 15 to 20 years have studied the Bible in the light of such thinkers as von Rad, Bult-

When scientist

When scientists differ

Sir, "I think I ought to comment on the Council's backslide on mixed ability science scheme" (November 12), although it would be inappropriate for me to enter into a public debate on the merits or demerits of the proposal.

The most important point is that Schools' Council subject committees are not obliged to give reasons for their decisions to those who apply to the council for financial support. In practice they always do, and subject advisers like Mr Harrison offer a great deal of help to applicants.

But this presupposes that those who ask the Schools' Council for support are prepared to accept the decisions of council committees with a good grace. Mr Green is reported as saying that "he had not had a proper chance to explain the reasons for it. It is true that we were able to discuss the proposal with Mr Green and Mr Herbert for only a relatively short time, when the matter came formally before us in October.

However, it must be emphasized that all already known and dealt with in a sympathetic way. Mr Green has not been asked to join the council last year. And Mr Green has

accepted our invitation to attend the previous (May) meeting of the science committee (although there was no constitutional obligation on our part to give him this opportunity) in order that we might have a preliminary discussion of his new proposal.

It is untrue to say that Mr Harrison and I are "not satisfied with the science committee's thoroughness", and Mr Harrison has authorized me to state that he did not say to your reporter "I don't think the committee gave proper consideration to any of the business before it that day..."

I am entirely satisfied that since I have been chairman we have given sound advice on every proposal put before us, and that no worthwhile proposal which could properly have been considered by the Schools' Council has failed to obtain a grant because of an adverse report on it by the science committee.

We are constantly seeking means of making the science committee into a body which will not only give good advice but will also be able to lead in matters of science education.

JOHN HARRISON
Chairman of the
Schools Council Science Committee.

Pity the poor teacher

Sir - With regard to the comments about November 12, when my father was at school, I am saying there was inevitably followed by a repeat performance at the same time next year. When I was at school there were certain rules and regulations, the breaking of which carried punishment. If we broke them, we were caught. We accepted the punishment.

Now we seem to be struggling in a system where no punishment can be awarded.

I am sure that rule breakers have the right to demand first that the school authorities be being strict on the discipline.

On the other hand, I should not be punished for breaking rules because they were unlikely enough to be caught.

The third defence is to combine the first one and the second one in order to bring the school authorities to a more strict attitude - if father or mother are not "bawling enough" to come to school and "nurse" the teacher.

Finally, the poor teacher, trying to establish reasonable discipline in a class of 40 students. No wonder more and more are collapsing under the strain.

Yours truly,
 15/11/68
 15/11/68

New conception of RE

Sir,—Dr Rhodes Boyson was quoted at a recent conference on religious education as saying: "I would like to see a return to simple Bible stories instead of this vague and spineless comparative hotch-potch which brings children up humanist and anchorless in these difficult days" (November 12). I take this to mean that Religious Education in schools should be used to inculcate a particular religious and moral code.

Such a view lacks any rational and historical insight, for it is precisely Dr Boyson's conception of the subject which has been one of the main causes of the decline in status of Religious Education in schools.

Yet Dr Boyson urges a return to the traditional approach, even

Asking questions hurts

Sir,—I share with Mr's Keith Hampson and Richard Mitchell (November 5) their views on a need for a further link into Mathematics for the curriculum.

To say, as Shirley Williams does, that inquiries take too long, is to beg the question. The Bullock report considered the first two R's; there is need of another report for the third R if only to redress the balance.

There are basic questions that need researching in the 16 inquiry domains—teaching methods, efficiency, desirable allocation, not least. Is there a survival level as has been suggested in the arithmetic for every-

How many girls love maths?

Patricia Kelly (November 12) clearly more special than she gives herself credit for. Reading the learned articles of *The Times Educational Supplement* at 13) cannot be normal teenage literary fare. It is, indeed, a privilege to defend myself against such earnest young opinion.

However I tried not to suggest that mathematical failure at such an age among girls was inevitable, simply a powerful possibility borne out by a number of observations among females generally, and which may well owe its origin to cultural differentiation in pre-school play, this in turn deriving from the sex stereotypes society tends to have produced.

The presence of one mathematics teacher and a few of her friends in the sample does not seem possibly to be selective anyway does not offer much by way of evidence to restrain my thoughts. One would like to ask Miss Kelly just how many girls are left in the school population who are accounted for "a quarter of her friends" and just what her views on and fortunes with mathematics are.

Moreover, I did not wish particularly to consider the secondary school curriculum. SMP is no doubt a very good scheme. I have seen it in use in the main and primary schools. It is the primary curriculum that I see as harmful to female potential in this subject, for in these very formative years when it is so vital to train the intellect in the sort of capacities that will help make the most of the mathematical material that inadequate attention is paid to the powerful role of play.

especially activities involving strategy and decision and analysis and judgment.

It is in this way that the pre-school differentiation works most in the boys' favour, I suggest. The pattern and scope of conventional primary maths courses, old or now, tends to reinforce these differences the children bring with them, by gearing itself to skills and faculties the boys have already considerably developed. Whereas boys, given time, can in one way or another catch up the linguistic deficiencies they tend to bring to school with them or five, it is much harder for the girls to catch up on the maths skills without some conscious and radical curriculum recognition of the play factor.

Boys, too, should benefit from situations in school which continue to expose them to the intellectual challenge of play. Dr Bennett found some such factor at work when he noted the better performance of boys in mathematics in achievement schools, both low and high achieving. This was because the boys were using the gap between that age this is not the main purpose anyway. It is the long-term potential for girls that I am concerned with.

There is too much to explain in terms of general female failure with thinning mathematical, technical and scientific. Miss Kelly, for me to be diverted by your argument. Meanwhile I would re-assert my belief that nature did not intend such differential endowment and in my school I shall go on trying to

HERVYN BENFORD,
Hill Cottage, Levknor, Oxford.

Foreign languages: spoken word beats the written

Mr. D. H. Graham (November 12). Commenting on Michael Buckley's article on the state of the teaching of languages suggested that an employee in administration, management or commerce one could be urged upon to "understand foreign correspondence and composition" as well as "foreign languages." Perhaps as co-author of the Nuffield-sponsored report, *Foreign Languages in Industry and Commerce*, published in 1974, I can give one of the conclusions of the report, which does not agree with the second half of Mr Graham's statement:

"The survey has shown the pre-eminence of use in industry and commerce of the skill of reading and the need for ability to converse in the foreign language. These are the skills most likely to be brought into play in leisure use of foreign languages: reading for pleasure, watching foreign films, reading for information and consulting in the foreign language in the holiday abroad. The schools should receive emphasis on the schools, whereas writing in foreign languages, whether in form of translation or of free composition, must be justified for reasons in the syllabus on grounds other than that of likely use in commerce."

It does not, of course, follow

from this that foreign language study, as such, in schools and colleges should be confined to reading and conversation exclusively. Other work in the foreign language must continue to be included as part of the general language learning process."

May I also quote from the report on the "market survey" of the non-specialist use of foreign languages in industry and commerce published by the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry:

"The fact that listening and speaking obtained the highest number of responses endorses the importance that the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry attaches to the oral/aural skills in the business context—exemplified in its Foreign Languages for Industry and Commerce examinations.

These quotations would tend to suggest that writing is less important to employment than speaking, listening and reading foreign languages.

KEITH EMMANS,
Language Teaching Centre,
University of York.

Letters for publication should arrive by Tuesday morning at the latest. They should be as short as possible and should be written on one side of the paper only. The editor reserves the right to cut or amend them if necessary.

Checking the birthrate sums

Sir,—Your report (November 12) on the effect of the Government's latest proposals for teacher training refers to the "continued plunge in the birthrate and a trend line which seems to be the only one that has any realistic projection." While it is vital for the education service that this debate is far wider than arguments about the figures, it is sad to see reference in the popular press to "SS having got it all sums wrong." Your readers will readily appreciate that the arithmetic of population projections is easy but the judgments on which they are based are very difficult. It is not the sums but the assumptions which are proved right or wrong.

Mrs Williams has rightly emphasized the need for realism rather than optimism in anticipating future levels of teacher employment, but her comments are critically dependent on demographic assumptions on which these latest proposals are based.

DES Report on Education No 85 on the "Future School Population", published in June 1976, is quite a good example of the confusion of the OPCS in making these projections. The 1975 "central" projection incorporates the assumption that in the long term the number of live births a woman will be 2.2, the "low" variant assumes a fertility rate of 2.1 births which is about the level required for the population just to replace itself.

At present the fertility rate is around 1.8 and in Report No 85 the effect of this rate in the long term is shown as a continuing "low" variant. In the late 1980s the difference between the "low" and the "continuing low" variants becomes more than 120,000 live births. Presumably the planners too optimistically, by 1990 the area between these two trend lines could represent more than one million statutory age children or around 50,000 teachers.

It is no way of avoiding the possibility that the set of assumptions chosen will prove to have been wrong but there need to be good reasons for making all such assumptions. The causes of the decline in the birthrate are many and complex yet even the OPCS "low" variant assumes not stability but a substantial recovery in the current fertility rate. The Secretary of State could not have been advised that such a judgment could be described as "realism".

PETER COLES
3 Bourne Close, Fishburne
Chichester, West Sussex.

Give others a turn, Dr Thwaites

Sir, it is paradoxical to find Dr Bryan Thwaites, now principal of Westfield College, supports the proposals of the Institute to teach mathematics for a national test of basic mathematical skills for Dr Thwaites is not only a former president of the Institute he is also the originator of the School Mathematics Project which is in its heyday days of the early sixties and so much to encourage the teaching of mathematics. I am sure that Dr Thwaites is in favour of the teaching of these same basic skills. All the great national debate on this curriculum goes under way without it to much ask that those who played prominent parts in previous, and now regretted trends should at least have the grace to remain silent?

Yours truly,
W.D. WILSON, M.A.,
The Headlands School,
Swindon, Wiltshire.

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Minister upholds ban on girl

For all courses other than the one referred to at 1(b) above, applications forms and further particulars may be obtained from the Admissions Office (Ref. C8), Moray House College of Education, 10 Holyrood Road, Edinburgh EH8 8AQ. In the case of the course at 1(b) above the relevant information and form should be requested from The Clearing House for CQSW Courses, 4th Floor, Myson House, Railway Terrace, Rugby, Warwick CV21 3JH. The normal closing dates are: January 31, 1977 for courses listed at 1(a), 1(b), 1(c) and 2(b); and March 31, 1977, for course 3 above.

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Ann Shaw is the one with the ball

At the Kirkby Sports
actly 100 boys have put
down for the cyclo-
ships. They have to

...the girls, brought into the community during the last time, have...
...the 70's and the 80's and they...

Wolsey Hall

Our exclusive methods
Study have 7, brown
295,000 examination
many first places
complete in

at a course which sends teachers out into the communities of
minority cultures

Teachers, school personnel managers, employment officers and shop stewards. The sample primary head, seconded to the

for granted. Although I would reject the overtones of bumbling good intentions or self-righteous hypocrisy that attach to the

ago that have interested teachers on the course. First, there is the question of minority-cultural children's mother

Alan James is a lecturer in education at Bishop Cusack College, Perth.

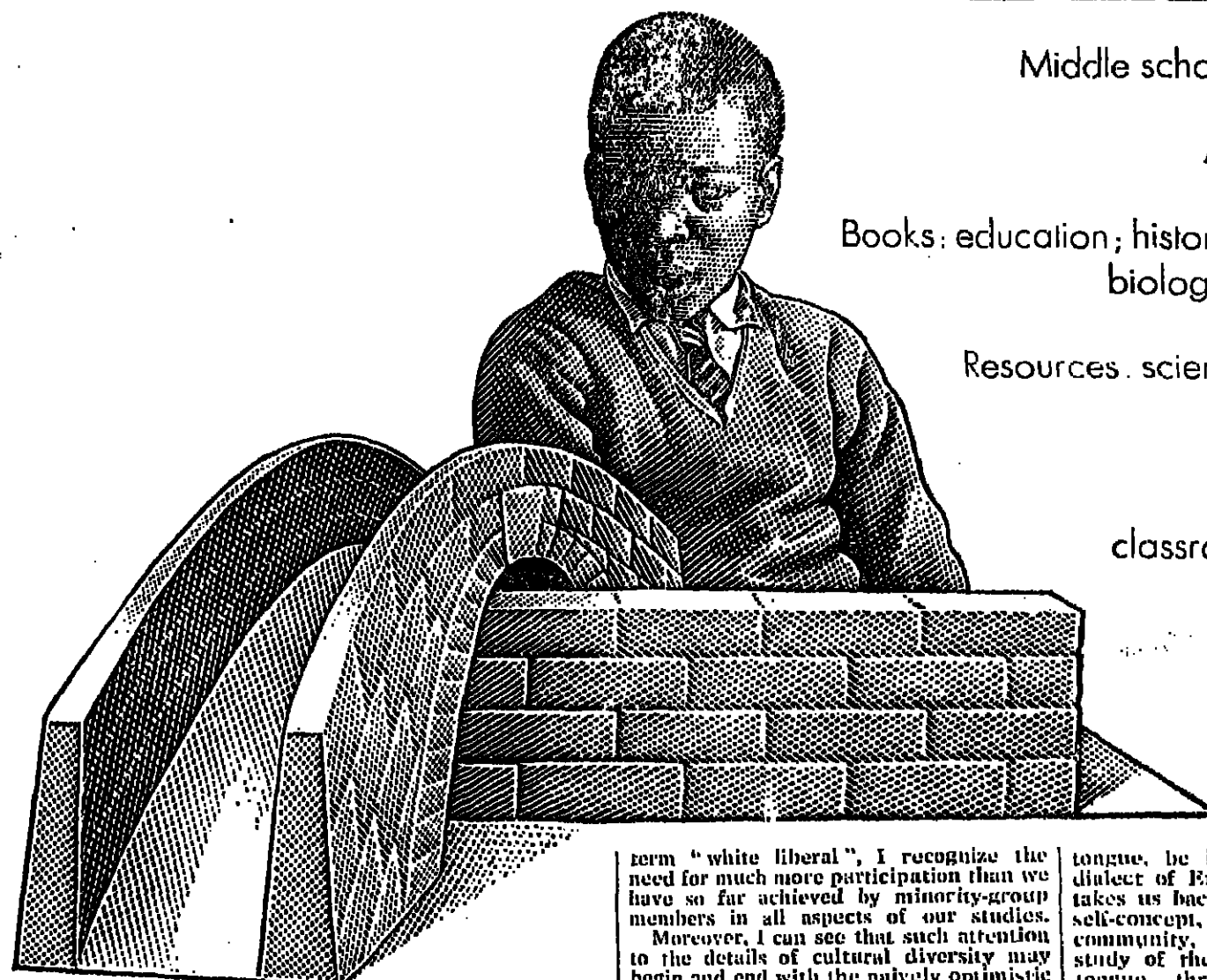


Illustration by Bill Sandgren

Middle schools **22/23**Arts features **24**Books: education: history: **25/27**

biology; English textbook:

Resources . science; 283/30

urban development

Talkback: **43**

classroom characteristics

How far have middle schools made a contribution to the education of children in their age-group? Do the chances of innovation now go back to the future?

The end of the middle?

Bob Doe

Middle schools, as someone probably once said, were created for that best of all educational reasons—because they were cheap. In many cases the raising of the school leaving age was most easily done by adding an extra year on to the comparatively cheap end of primary schooling, rather than the pricey end of secondary. But RSLA has come and gone, and few more middle schools are likely to be created for pedagogical reasons. Any rationalization of the age of transfer is likely to happen for administrative rather than educational reasons as falling school rolls make, say 12, a feasible common age. There are those who hope the minority of middle schools will have a creative influence on the education of 8 to 13s, wherever they go to school. But the majority within this category which has been created for administrative reasons, with serious questions about how and what should be taught, and middle school teachers are left wondering whether a different approach does their pupils or themselves any good.

Only about 10 per cent of children in the middle years actually go to the 1,154

middle schools. Most of them are 8 to 12 or 9 to 13 schools. There are also 348 combined first and middle schools.

Though this is more than double the number three years ago, the Department of Education no longer expect the 25 per cent of middle schools by the 1980s they once did, and few more are likely to be created.

Middle schools are often said to be the chance to rethink the education of all 8 to 13s. It is an awkward age group, on the plateau between the need for basic skills, teaching in the primary school and the pressures of examinations in the secondary school. In the past they have tended to be treated badly, marking time while they wait to go on to the big school, or being plunged into the hectic round of specialist teaching, looking at a different face in a different room every hour of the school day. Often they were only given the rump of the staff after the needs of sixth form and examination classes had been attended to.

The Schools Council's middle years of schooling project found that only a minority of middle schools set out to provide something distinctively different to primary or secondary schools. Of the others, some were most like primary schools, others like secondary schools and some offered two years of each approach.

When the Assistant Masters Association sounded out its members on the effects of such a varied pattern the answer was that the middle school system was in "chaos". The AMA accused them of working with total disregard for what was to follow in the senior schools. The association said there was considerable variation in the ground covered especially in subjects like maths, where one school might be following a traditional approach

Modern languages and science were also picked out. The result was that senior schools often had to start all over again in some subjects, they said.

Heads of middle schools, inspectors and advisers accept that such complaints are not groundless, though few perhaps would use "chaos" to describe the pre-

sent picture. Some middle schools have been very successful in developing new approaches to school organization and pastoral care, but they have a long way to go to develop a curriculum that makes a distinctive contribution to the education of this age group and harmonizes with what comes before and after.

There has been plenty of talk about such a curriculum and the need for continuity, but little good practice has emerged. Not the least cause of this is that many schools have to grope their own way towards salvation, with little or no help. The development of middle schools has been haphazard, even within local education authorities. Their existence has often been dictated by the best way of using available buildings, or by

the ideas of education authorities no longer exist.

Many authorities found themselves possible for these completely unsought animals as a result of government reorganization and changes and had little idea about what to do.

Advisers, in some cases, but on the job and, as one headmaster said, "It is a case of the schools being advisers."

Middle and upper schools together to discuss their own how it can be made to interlink but there are limits to what can be achieved. Middle schools may see upper schools—and even senior schools—take in pupils at the age of



Ravenscote children moving along the middle



Bob Doe looks at some of their current difficulties, while Arthur Razzell (below) describes the early years of one purpose-built middle school

schools, too, may take pupils from as many as 15 or 20 different feeder schools, all varying considerably in their approach. Within a single authority it is possible to have ex-secondary-modern-turned-middle schools which launch 9-year-olds straight into a secondary school-style timetable of specialist teachers; middle schools owing more to the mother-hen approach of primary schools; and those which are trying to forge a weaning link between the two styles, as well as opening up new areas of education such as interdisciplinary work through environmental studies.

This divergence has led to demands from some teachers and heads, even before the Prime Minister's Oxford speech, that local authorities should ex-

cise more coordination and control over what is taught. Others want to be left alone to develop the individual styles of their own schools, however, and even the AMA report agreed that the middle school curriculum should not be dictated by the senior schools.

Some believe there is a distinction to be drawn between middle schools which end at 12, and those which go on to 13. The former is said to be just an extended form of junior school, and only transfer at 13 is supposed to allow the chance to develop novel approaches to schooling for the middle years. But in many cases it is in this thirteenth year that middle schools meet the greatest difficulty in finding appropriate work to stretch their pupils while ensuring continuity with the

upper school. This is especially true in subjects like mathematics, science and languages.

One middle school head described how some of the brightest children in his top classes were ready to start a second foreign language. But what was the good of beginning German when they would not be able to continue when they transferred to the upper school? It raised a staffing problem too. How was he to attract specialist teachers for subjects like these when all he could offer would be a few periods a week of German, and the rest of the time spent as a general classroom teacher?

Well-trained specialist teachers are not difficult to find in middle schools, however. Many of them are attracted away from upper schools because they have less trouble with discipline. "I want to teach, not keep order," said one. But, like their colleagues in that other haven of civility, the sixth form colleges, a move away from the blunt edge of schooling is not without its price. They may end up asking where they can go from here. The most a teacher in a four-form entry middle school can hope to get is a scale 3 allowance, and the hopes of middle schools showing the others how it should be done is no guarantee that primary and secondary schools are going to welcome with open arms and promotion the teacher whose main experience is in the middle schools.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate has been as active as anyone else in all the talking that is hoped to precede action on these questions. In 1975, the inspectors ran 21 short in-service courses on middle school topics. But little in the way of positive direction can be expected from this quarter until the Inspectorate has completed its two major surveys of the primary and secondary curriculum. Not until then will it be clear in their own minds what schooling for this age group should be.

Even then the Inspectorate is unlikely to come up with any pronouncement about what the average 13-year-old ought to have done. Some inspectors are already saying this is impossible, because different children start with different advantages and disadvantages, and a common standard could only mean a common low standard.

It is no more reasonable to expect middle schools to turn out homogenous sets of pupils than it was to expect primary schools to do so at 11. Their 10s are likely to range between 70 and 140, it is pointed out, and this means their achievements are likely to mirror those of the averages for 7- to 14-year-olds. Upper schools, it seems, have got to learn to cope with this.

The Inspectorate seems to take the view that schools should only differ in the topics or illustrations they use in their teaching. The underlying skills and attitudes they pass on should be more or less the same. If, however, the differences between schools prove to be less than superficial, and the extremes that can exist prove this to be so, there might well be some pressure for a rationalization of what is basic to every child's education, and of the muddled system in which it is given. At the extreme, 13-year-olds can be found in grammar schools already specializing in science or languages, while there are others in middle schools who have not even started languages yet, and for whom science may still mean little more than nature study.

Chaos may not be too strong a word to describe the clash that has taken place between the newly-created tiers of education in some parts of the system. But for many of these schools it is still early days: most middle schools have only been in existence for less than three years. The difficulties that seem so serious now could well seem less so as schools find more mutual understanding as the talk is translated into action; and if the priorities for the curriculum of all schools really does become less the sole province of the individual school and teacher. If the evolution of ideas about the middle years of schooling spreads, as it is beginning to, into other schools teaching this age group, middle school teachers might still find a wider market for their experience.



...pupils can work with specialist and class teachers.

The effect is neutral

Arthur Razzell

Nearly 10 years ago Plowden recom-

mended that the age range of middle schools should be 8 to 12 or 9 to 13. It was noted that the 11-year-olds were increasingly out of place in the large secondary school complexes that were developing.

When the first middle schools opened eight years ago the age range was not the eight to 12 recommended by Plowden but nine to 13. The first working models were not therefore schools that had added a year to primary education, but new schools with a half-junior, half-secondary age-range.

Understandably, this first batch of middle schools was much visited. Their resources, organization and curricula were widely discussed wherever the creation of middle schools was being considered. The influence of the first venture, in the Hantsworth Division of the West Riding, ought not to be underestimated when

middle school development is considered nationally.

Although doubts about the wisdom of creating a middle school system were expressed, there was a widespread feeling that these schools would do much to bridge the widening gap between primary and secondary school practices. Not only would youngsters have a year longer to mature in a predominantly primary school atmosphere before they moved on to meet a full range of specialist teachers, but there was also the expectation that the additional year would enhance the status of the old junior school. John Burrows, then chief inspector for primary education, summed up the mood of the period when he envisaged these new middle schools as embracing the best of primary and secondary practice.

Now the euphoria has gone, and the question is being openly asked: "Will there be any more?" An additional year was added to secondary schooling, but the minister was clearly in no mood

to create a new school system. He had just visited a school which was a hotch-potch of middle, intermediate or junior high schools. In some cases they are thick on the ground, in many cases they are isolated, in small clusters in the suburbs that still retain a primary school atmosphere.

Lacking any corporate sense of identity, some of these schools have been unduly influenced by either the primary or secondary, parts from which they developed. There is often an additional pressure for them to emulate the curricula of that of the local secondary schools to which they send their children. This pressure is especially strong where the neighbouring secondary school has a double intake of 12 plus from existing junior schools and 13 plus from the new middle school.

With only 100 middle schools set up in the first five years, there is a limited range of models to draw on. The influence of the first venture, in the Hantsworth Division of the West Riding, ought not to be underestimated when

lishing for such a minority market is an unattractive proposition. The most that can be hoped for is the occasional article in a national journal, and the variety of Middle Years of Schooling publications from the Schools Council. There is some evidence to suggest that the direct influence of the latter is less than might have been expected.

What follows is therefore not in any way a description of a typical middle school—such institutions have, as yet, no brand image, no corporate sense of identity. It is about one Plowden-type school that had a precipitous opening in September 1972.

From the outset, I was convinced that middle schools were not, in themselves, capable of solving any major educational problem. They are as neutral in their effect as open-plannedness, integrated dayness or other such educational devices.

In June 1972 I was faced with the task of recruiting 22 staff. With the exception of the deputy head and senior master, they were all self-selecting. We had just

vacated a junior primary school. The team had never met before, but they had engaged on the stages of the middle years of schooling project at Lancaster University. The project team, under the direction of Professor Alec Ross, had undertaken a series of dissemination conferences around the country, and many teachers who attended these meetings were already working in middle schools.

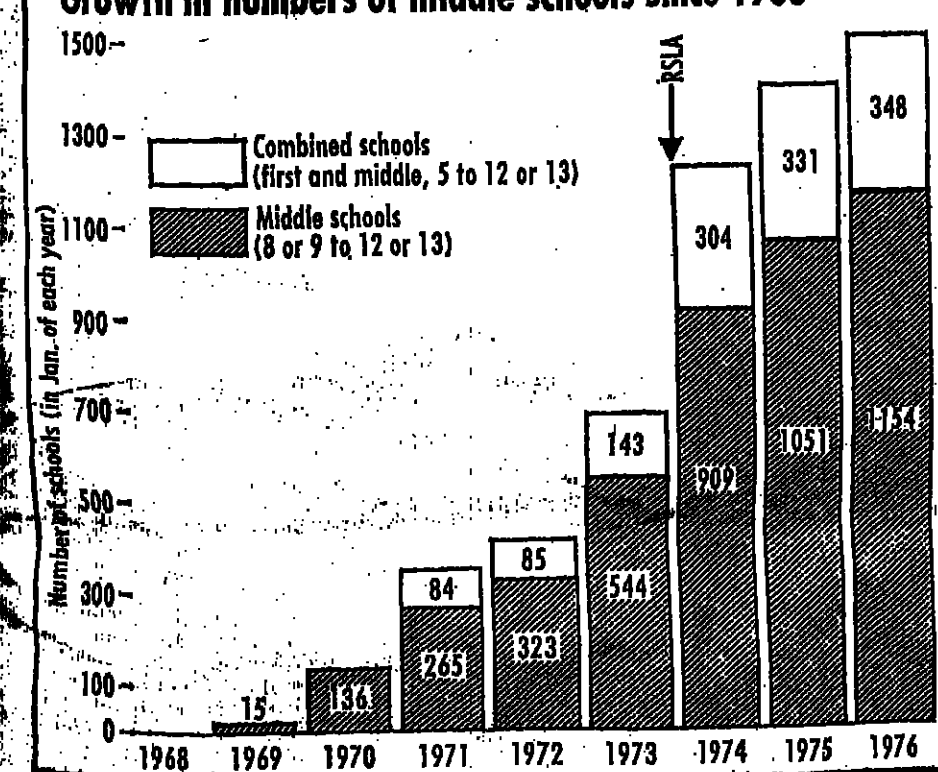
Their questions illuminated some of the problems they were facing, and it gradually became clear to me that in a growing search for a broad and better unknown. There was a need for two brief meetings with some of the Ravenscote staff in July, but we first met more than 600 new middle school staff in a large hall at the school. The first meeting was a success, and the staff accepted the challenge of the new venture.

ance by the staff of three schools that should regulate but not pre-empt the middle school by many decades. First, we threw our energies toward creating a new where parents and teachers were together. This, as Richard Mulcahy put it in the sixteenth century, was a thing more than establishing a fund-raising PTA. Second, we engaged in Sir Perry Nunn's excellence and encourage our staff to do the same. Third, we should find a joy in working together; one of the greatest joys of the shadow report. The objective objectives had to wait until the flag was nailed to the mast from the day.

Most middle schools are in the process of being created, and a lot depends on the imagination shown and authority in adapting the new tenants. It is fortunate in having the planning designed shortly after the Plowden report and built in the grounds. It came into being at those rare moments when money was quite as short as it had been, or become. However the planners would pose that the occupants would adopt a year-group structure, choose any other form of organization would have meant fighting over accommodation, rather than an explicit potential.

First- and second-year teaching teachers, but each year-group has an experienced, and highly-qualified leader who is free of form bias responsibilities. These leaders are able to share in the work of each form in the year group, and by this means standards can be regularly monitored and additional help can be made available when and where it is needed.

Growth in numbers of middle schools since 1968



when the purposes change—fitting year-groups of 200 and more into accommodation designed for a maximum of 160, for example.

Most of the staff work as full-time form teachers, but each year-group has an experienced, and highly-qualified leader who is free of form bias responsibilities. These leaders are able to share in the work of each form in the year group, and by this means standards can be regularly monitored and additional help can be made available when and where it is needed.

Many staff have taken their own studies to degree level, but rather than act as specialists in the secondary school sense of the term, they serve as consultants and advisers to the rest of us. Once the concept of a learning community is accepted, there is nothing strange in seeing a group of senior staff being taught by this means standards can be regularly monitored and additional help can be made available when and where it is needed.

The school is served by two fine first schools, with whom we have extremely close relationships. Liaison at the secondary level involves many more teachers and is therefore more complex, but not less close. The first meetings at the secondary level begin immediately after Easter, and in addition to exchanges of staff and the normal county record cards we prepare a special list of children who seem likely to be at risk during the transfer period. On this list we show children who have shown exceptional talent and abilities in any aspect of school life, children who need to be recognized immediately, and helped.

course in handling clay to a group of colleagues who read science, maths, politics and psychology at university.

There is some specialist teaching, where a colleague has exceptional skills not readily learnt by others—music for example—and we have a full-time consultant on remedial education. But the organization is predominantly that of a primary school, supplemented and enriched by a group of expert advisers.

Through a regular series of curriculum meetings, deepened by the occasional staff weekend conference, we seem to have reached a happy compromise between the acceptance of a common core curriculum and the professional freedom of the teacher. The deputy head has accepted the hazardous task of acting as the school's chancellor of the exchequer, and she holds an annual "horse-trading" session when the capitation allowance is divided up into acceptable year-group shares, with special funding for specific subject interests. When there is need for major capital investment such as the purchase of a new mini-bus or additional instruments for the orchestra, the matter comes before the PTA, and if we are persuasive enough, they undertake a special fund-raising effort.

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All this has very little to do with Ravenscote being specifically a middle school, and why should it? The label is really meaningless, although we would all agree that it is better than the old elementary school classification. Perhaps also it is no bad thing, when so much is being turned upside down, to be regarded as being in the middle.

We also pick out the slower learners and say what steps have been taken to help them, and the levels of attainment they have reached. And we mention children who are especially sensitive, have specific personal problems, and are likely to be under some strain in adapting themselves to a new school. Secondary staff visit the school and unobtrusively observe these youngsters at work during the summer term, so that they can be recognized as people.

Inter-year group clubs and societies flourish and there are many parents at work in the school every day. As a nation we have never been fortunate enough to have sufficient adults around, especially in schools for the younger children. At Ravenscote the parents work alongside the professionals. They have much to offer. They may join a youth-jostelling group, help with the many jobs that need doing in a large school, or by the more personal sharing of experiences with children.

The captain of a jumbo-jet may come to talk about his work one week, the local doctor another, or a mother may come along to describe how she came to terms with being blind—the range and variety is enormous. In a very powerful way many of our children have been enriched in their learning by these non-teacher contacts. And our parents are generous enough to admit that it is far from being a one-way process; they too have learned a great deal.

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Arthur Razzell is headmaster of Ravenscote Middle School, Trimley, Shirey.

26 Books/History/Biology

A sharp left turn

Alec Nove on E. H. Carr's Soviet Russia

A History of Soviet Russia: Foundations of a Planned Economy 1926-1929. Volume three, parts one and two. By E. H. Carr. Macmillan £15.00 each. 333 542469 7 and 542496 1.

Carr's history of Soviet Russia is in its final stages. There is so much detail so skillfully woven together, so many sources consulted, and the results are presented so clearly that the huckeysmith epithets "monumental" or "Herculean task" do scant justice to the work of this formidable scholar. Age has made E. H. Carr less nimble, and his acknowledged much help from Tamara Deutscher, but one can only wish that man half his age had his energy and productivity. A great job well done.

Having said this, my first criticism is essentially editorial. There are two volumes, which together with a final third volume cover the whole field of foreign relations (including the policies of the Comintern) for the three years 1926-29. (The third volume is intended to deal with relations with China, India and "semi-colonial" countries, and will contain the index to all three volumes.) Yet all three volumes are together labelled "volume three", and while the dust-cover describes the two under review as "parts one and two", the list of contents of the two "parts" includes both "part four" and "part five". This is a pity, as it obscures the importance of the two volumes under review, which cover the most important period 1926-29 in its various aspects. The reader is not assisted by the use of this general title, which seems to imply that the present volumes will contain "part four" and "part five".

But this double volume does indeed contain fascinating material. Its arrangement at first sight

might seem odd. First we have the relations of the Soviet Union with the principal capitalist countries. There follows an analysis of the activities of the Communist International and related bodies. Then well over 300 pages (almost the whole second volume, or part, or whatever) are devoted to "communist parties in the capitalist world". In less skilful hands such an approach would lead to repetition or obscurity: thus Soviet fears of military action by Great Britain, or the policies associated with "social fascism" are referred to several times on widely scattered pages. However, Carr manages with his usual skill to avoid confusion or an excess of cross-references.

A different criticism relates to the space he actually allows to foreign parties. Even allowing for the need to tell the story of the Anglo-Russian committee, how can one justify giving 85 pages in a history of Russia to the British CP? No doubt Carr's motive was to show how the internal situation of the various parties interacted with Comintern and Soviet policies, but he may have been in this instance too generous with his time.

Carr provides much invaluable evidence on the so-called "left turn", which found its formal expression in the resolutions of sixth Congress of the Comintern (1928). This was time of extreme sectarianism, of a revolutionary militancy of language strangely at odds with the political realities of the countries concerned. Carr cites a proclamation, drafted in Moscow, which ends with the words: "A man the workers' Front workers' councils in Austria! Long live the victory of Red Vienna!" Yet the Austrian CP was insignificant. Similar nonsense was committed elsewhere.

Some have argued that this was a byproduct of the "left turn" within the Soviet Union, though this,

too, seems odd: Bukharin could have been defeated, was in fact being ousted, without foreign parties having to be urged to adopt extremist policies. Pressure from left-wingers in the other parties? They existed, to be sure, but their success in ousting their moderate colleagues was surely due in large part to the support given them by Moscow, as Carr himself shows.



German-Russian refugees after disembarking at Swinemunde, 1933.

The same perplexity arises when reading Carr's account of the policy of viciously attacking the social democrats as "social fascists", insisting on the essentially fascist nature of social democracy, and regarding the left social democrats as the most dangerous enemies of all. This policy had the most disastrous results. The "left turn" became powerful. Carr lets the facts speak for themselves, quoting without comment such rubbish as "the aims of fascism and social-democracy are the same."

He might with advantage have probed further into the causes (the may yet do so in the final volume), and assign a greater degree of responsibility for these policy excesses to Stalin and his henchmen—though Stalin did at this stage remain in the background so far as Comintern affairs were concerned.

Carr's account of the war psychosis of 1927-29 is of great interest. The Soviet leaders, and after them the sections of the Comintern, fulminated about the imminence of war against the Soviet Union, with Great Britain cast for the role of chief devil. Carr makes clear that the danger was vastly exaggerated, and fear of war was used politically within the USSR to strengthen Stalin's hold on power. It is true, he said, that Western and Soviet statesmen also exaggerated the impact of communist subversion. Yet the parallel is inexact.

Britain did break off diplomatic relations. In 1927, and anti-Soviet speeches were often made. But the notion of a military clash between Britain and the Soviet Union, with Great Britain cast for the role of chief devil, Carr makes clear that the danger was vastly exaggerated, and fear of war was used politically within the USSR to strengthen Stalin's hold on power. It is true, he said, that Western and Soviet statesmen also exaggerated the impact of communist subversion. Yet the parallel is inexact.

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Paperbacks

Life cycles

Roy Blatchford on English teaching

Butterflies by Arthur Vernon Shearer (Penguin 60p. 14). An awkward format, but an exact illustration of the butterfly's life cycle, from egg to caterpillar, pupa, and adult. The book is a good one for the classroom.

Notes on field observation in the opening paragraph of this latest volume in the Changing World series, Michael Saunders adds a further twist to the labouring of "traditional" and "progressive". He quotes Caldwell's book from 1912: "The natural sciences of study in youth is play".

Part two looks at English in action in three comprehensive, each of which has its own priorities in language teaching, and at the agenda of most department meetings—curriculum, staffing, books, provision, class libraries, the role of drama, assessment of skills, integrated curriculum and public examinations.

Part three dips at random into the educational topic basket: The Willy Reader: Design for Writing. By Caroline Eckhardt, John Wiley £4.30. 471 22970 9. Like the Cadillac, The Willy Reader is a big, bold and noisy. It is an American textbook in English, and it is a good one for the classroom.

Progressives' progress

Roy Blatchford on English teaching

author examines the progress of course books from Ridout to Geoffrey Summerfield; the theory behind the "new" practice—balancing it against the traditionalists' tradition—the influence of F. R. Leavis; language and literature as serving different purposes and therefore constituting separate studies.

His conclusion opts neither for Plato's nor Rousseau's vision of the "educated man". The contest does not resolve itself into simple battle lines, but rests inevitably vague: "the requirements of the subject and those of individual pupils are seen not to be at odds".

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27 Books/English

Talking pointers

Peter Fanning on oral expression

Talk: A Practical Guide to Oral Work in the Secondary School. By David Self. Ward Lock Educational £2.25. 7062 3433 2.

Gone are the days when children were seen and not heard. Nowadays if children are not heard in class, then something is surely wrong. We must guide them, stimulate them, give them every opportunity to talk. What with Bullock and James Britton and a host of other researchers, there has been a gradual revolution in the general approach to language in the curriculum. Oral development, talking and listening—is considered essential for every child. But how to go about it?

Faced with a class of 30 teenagers, how can a teacher provide opportunities for every child to think and talk? David Self's book provides some of the answers. It is a readable, down-to-earth, up-to-date handbook with a sound theoretical basis and is clearly directed towards young teachers and students.

But, as the author freely admits, talk cannot be created in isolation. Blooding chunks of it cannot be amputated from the rest of the curriculum and placed under the tutorial microscope. Thus, sections on improvisation and Role-playing see Mr Self providing an instant

course. Likewise, he finds it necessary to provide a 23 page appendix full of Useful Topics for Discussion. Useful as indeed these are, they read like the digest of a poor man's course book—equally suitable for reading, writing or talking about.

There is a lot of general teaching ground to be covered before we get down to the basics; and it is all very thorough—as if a sledge hammer were being employed to crack an elusive nut. A list of 20 qualities possessed by the ideal teacher leaves the mind in befuddled confusion, whereas four cardinal principles might have made an impression.

Other areas covered include aural training, informal talk, reading, about public speaking and word games. I am never quite sure about the precise lesson plan, the "Do-it-my-way" technique, which is employed a good deal in this book. But at least it keeps the subject from becoming air-borne and there are useful observations about planning and organization—especially about engineering and motivating group work.

Things are nothing startlingly original about Talk, but the theme and variations are worth any amount of repetition. This book is intended for use across the curriculum. I wonder how many non-English specialists will read it.

Dream poems

Martin Booth

Medieval Dream Poetry. By A. C. Searling. Cambridge University Press £8.50. 521 21194 8. £3.00. 29069 4.

Dream poetry, one of the most fascinating aspects of medieval literature, often tends to be overlooked. This study, which begins with a definition of the genre and its traditions in medieval literature, passes from the Roman de la Rose to Chaucer (including the rarely discussed *The Book of the Duchess*) and to the alliterative and Chaucerian traditions from Langland to Lydgate, Skelton and Dunbar.

The plan of the book enables the reader to be led logically from one period of dream poetry to another, and clarifies some of the complexities of the form by placing the poems in the context of other well-known contemporary works.

Despite its inevitable degree of specialisation, this penetrating and lucid study (which is well within the reach of A level students) provides invaluable information about the background to this literary tradition and to medieval literature as a whole.

Hardy factory

Roy Blatchford

The Final Years of Thomas Hardy. By Harold G. Mitchell. Macmillan £7.95. 333 19454 3.

The Hardy factory continues to churn out books which illustrate the Grand Old Man, Harold G. Mitchell's extraordinarily priced volume of 150 pages reads like a series of lectures delivered at a Hardy Festival or Summer School; he is Vice-President of the English Thomas Hardy Society—and his book contrasts nicely with the enthusiastic erudition of Robert Gittings's *Young Thomas Hardy*.

The final days began in 1912 according to Professor Oral; successive chapters read: Hardy's response to Nature, war, China, and the end of the world; Hardy's response to the development of the poet's tenderest feelings for Emma; A questionable bonus: an evaluation of the "aggressive originality" of *The Dynasts*; and the play that was Hardy's last major creative work, *The Dynasts*.

Was it really necessary?

Andrew Currie on the Common Market referendum

The 1975 Referendum. By David Butler and Uwe Kitzinger. Macmillan £7.95. 333 19708 9.

Referendum Counts. By Philip Gould. David Poyser £5.00. 7067 0206 9.

Britain into Europe. Edited by Roger Jowell and Gerald Hulse. George Allen £4.95. 45664 264 9.

The 1975 referendum was a unique landmark in our constitutional history, notwithstanding earlier flirtations of the idea. On this occasion there was much argument about the possible abdication of national sovereignty because of entry to the

Common Market—and the Government decided that the electorate should be consulted on the question whether the country should remain in the Community.

These three volumes tell with varying emphases this story of the debate about entry into Europe, held at a time when the country was at a crossroads, and what was the constitutional significance of the steps taken. Dr Butler and Mr Kitzinger have provided the most detailed account, as one would expect from a distinguished political scientist and an authority on the communities; a first-class book, and a book which realises the authors' declared aim. The admirable text is enlivened

by cartoons and supplemented by many telling figures.

In the Radio Lecture before the University of Cambridge in May 1974, the late Lord Macmillan compared the pro and con of the referendum with the more pragmatic approach of the English; he had their respective legal systems in mind.

I detect in these books a reminder that the issue of the Common Market seemed to be debated not so much as a matter of principle, but as a matter of expediency—although not, of course, in the pejorative sense of that word. Hence it is hardly surprising to read that some politicians in the space of a few years vacillated not only about entry into Europe, but also about a referendum; that in the debate some speakers seemed

to be on events, for example, that of Mr Powell in the February, 1974, election campaign, and that of the German Chancellor at the Labour Party conference.

It is as well as the other authors—describes how the BBC lapsed less large than other issues in the minds of the electorate, and he offers interesting guidelines for the future use of referenda. His book includes (for good measure) material on devolution, a Bill of Rights, electoral and other reforms, referenda abroad, and valuable historical and other appendices; it is a worthy alternative to Butler and Kitzinger's.

Mr Jowell and Mr Hulse have brought together six essays by different writers on the issues of public opinion, the changing constitution, sovereignty, the importance of opinion polls, and slight preoccupation of the public with the referendum, and a good selection of other material, and seems to be a good one for the classroom.

The referendum really needed a book to support the principle of the referendum, and the book by Lord Macmillan in the Dimbleby Lecture for 1974, thought that as the British constitution showed signs of old age, it was necessary to consider a Bill of Rights, among other things. The book is a good one for the classroom.

But even in the face of such a distinguished and authoritative book, one might have doubts about the desirability of referenda. It is a good one for the classroom. The book is a good one for the classroom.

Books for keeps

Just over six weeks since the end of the year, the School Book Association is sponsoring a national project to collect a book for every child in the country. The book is a good one for the classroom.

From next Monday onwards, a book for every child in the country will be collected. The book is a good one for the classroom.

Among this week's contributors: Peter Benton is a teacher at a secondary school in Oxford. The book is a good one for the classroom.

Andrew Currie is a teacher at a secondary school in Oxford. The book is a good one for the classroom.

THE YOUNG OFFICER: A book for every child in the country. The book is a good one for the classroom.

Children's literature

The Exploits of Mr Scurry Squirrel. By George Wyat, illustrated by George Wyat. George Allen and Unwin £2.95. 04 323123 9.

When a squirrel buys a fancy waistcoat for exactly £45 and opens a bank account in Davos, one begins to suspect that this is no ordinary animal story. When that same squirrel travels up to London and stays in the Hyde Park Hotel and visits the Ministry of the Environment to discuss a preservation order on a parcel of trees which the wicked

Mr Scurry Squirrel (alias Woodrow Wyatt) is planning to cut down in order to build houses (thereby complementing the claim with a blend of prose and panache).

Apparently Mr Scurry Squirrel was originally told as a bed-time story. But he might find a more understanding audience among the children of the Sunday newspapers.

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Science

Commissioned by Chelsea College Centre for Science Education

A gift for science

by Jackie Hardie

Many of the goods displayed in toy shops at Christmas are supposed to be "educational" and "creative". I have examined some of the scientific sets and kits aimed at the seven to 14 age range to find if they fulfil these claims and if their contents could be adapted for classroom use.

The Worlds of Birds and Plants

"A green, red, black and yellow bird flies on to your lawn. It probes with its beak. What is it?" So begins the manual to *The World of Birds* kit, a similar question opens the corresponding booklet of *The World of Flowers and Trees*. "Do you know the names of all trees near to your home or those you pass on the way to school?"

The *World of Birds* box contains a green polystyrene bird table (43cm x 30cm x 7cm) which is compartmentalized and fitted with five trays. One acts as a central drinking and bathing area (23cm x 20cm x 25cm) and the others as food trays (12cm x 75cm x 2.5cm) which are protected from the splashes of energetic bathing birds by vertical screens.

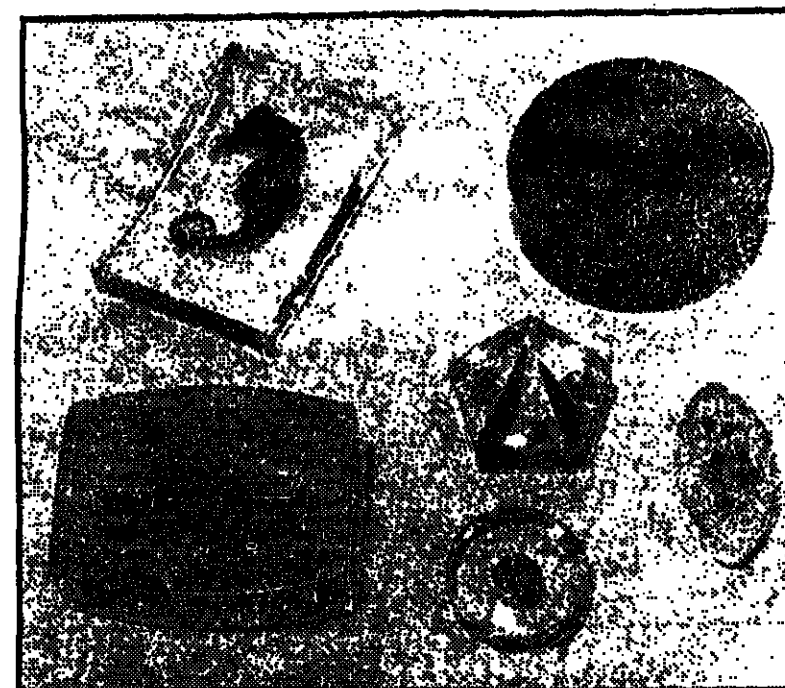
The manual contains illustrated instructions for suspending the table from a tree branch (using the 2.4m of cord provided) or for supporting it on a pole or wall. The hanging technique was the easiest as it did not require the drilling of walls or poles, but the addition of gravel to stabilise the suspended table meant much frustrating unmanoeuvring.

The table was hung at the end of summer term (1976) and according to 11-year-old volunteer East London observers whose previous knowledge of birds extended to "spurrers"—has to date attracted chaffinches, goldfinches, willow warblers and house sparrows—so this suggests that the kit has widened the ornithological knowledge of some pupils.

The manual also contains recipes for food mixes and bird-cake, and instructions for an improved jam jar food hopper, though all attempts to make this failed.

The use of a hollow rectangular polystyrene box as the table base suggests a use for those shapes that protect expensive electronic equipment in transit; any teacher with a little imagination and a cooperative television dealer should be able to make a similar bird table.

The manual describes "how to set about birdwatching" and gives useful guidelines for purchasing binoculars, writing up a field notebook, joining ornithological societies and rules for bird watchers



Above: Kits for observing birds.
Left: Specimens embedded in resin

such as the best colour anorak to wear and conservation—the author rightly emphasizing that "the interests of the bird always come first".

There are detailed instructions on noting a bird's characteristics using criteria such as comparative size. A good annotated diagram of a bird's anatomy provides a vocabulary for use in the notes. Thirty-six common British birds can be identified from a series of detailed references to be consulted should the bird be outside this range.

Two full-colour filmstrips and a viewer provided with the kit aid identification. Each frame on the strips is numbered in the bottom right hand corner and the descriptive paragraphs are correspondingly numbered.

The individual frames are magnified by the eye-piece lens of the pocket viewer. The photographs are good apart from two which are unclear; that of the heron is a head-on view of a breeding bird so its plumage, beak shape and leg details are obscured and the blue tit specimen's colouring does not correspond to the accurate description of the adult in the manual.

The descriptions outline each bird's habitat, sex, plumage, nest and flight pattern, but fail to give each bird's adult size. A 7in, 33rpm record features reasonable recordings of the calls and songs of 18 birds: the commentator states a number (which corresponds to the bird's film strip frame and manual description number) before each recording, a technique that should help children to identify the birds when they can be heard but not seen.

The kit might introduce some children to a fascinating hobby but it is expensive when compared with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds' *World of Birds* and *World of Flowers and Trees* kits.

The World of Flowers and Trees kit is attractively packaged. The botanical illustrations are lower grade with "absorption" (water) and "paper" (cardboard) and a metric ruler, a clear plastic protractor, a metric tape measure, rubber wax, three 54 frame filmstrips with a total of 54 frames, a viewer and a manual written by Marygrove Thewissen. The manual gives information on the use of the other items and is divided into one section on trees and another on flowers, facilitating

tion of such phrases could reduce some of the problems teachers face when re-teaching photosynthesis and respiration.

There are instructions for activities such as the measurement of tree height. For this the metric tape, inclinometer and protractor are needed: the child must measure a line 100 metres away from the tree being investigated and at the regulated distance point the inclinometer at the tree, find the angle of elevation, produce a scale drawing and perform a simple calculation.

The method is verbose and could be simplified by the inclusion of simple line drawings. Moreover it assumes that all children who receive the kit can use inclinometers, protractors, angles of elevation and scale drawings.

There are 23 trees described in the manual: some as well known as holly, others, such as the maidenhair tree, more obscure. One of the filmstrips is devoted to trees—each of the 18 frames is numbered they might be expected to correspond in order to the unnumbered descriptions. They do much at the start but after the omission of one tree (hawthorn) the frames show the trees' summer appearance whilst the manual's diagrams feature the winter silhouette.

The wild flower section starts with background information and proceeds with the use of the flower press, but no attempt is made to encourage the thoughtful selection of specimens and the conservation of species. The rest of the manual is concerned with the identification of individual flowers, aided by the unnumbered frames of the filmstrips, but this time the frames and descriptions correspond.

The flowers range from the daisy to the less familiar (at least to many urban children) bugle and purple loosestrife. The photographs are good and each description is clear and concise. The illustrations are lower grade with "absorption" (water) and "paper" (cardboard) and a metric ruler, a clear plastic protractor, a metric tape measure, rubber wax, three 54 frame filmstrips with a total of 54 frames, a viewer and a manual written by Marygrove Thewissen. The manual gives information on the use of the other items and is divided into one section on trees and another on flowers, facilitating

The physiology is so simple as to be misleading. For example, a comparison of plant feeding and plant breathing is incorrect: said to "purify the air" whereas the latter is the process of photosynthesis.

Model: Fern and Zoo. Bringing a famous model soldier manufacturer's products, these models have been aimed at children since the late 1940s. The models



Above: Kits for observing birds.
Left: Specimens embedded in resin

described, those from W. David and the Led and Thomas Salter.

David's claim that their kit is educational and creative whereas Salter's maintains that theirs provides an all year creative hobby for all over 10 years' and only this manufacturer emphasises the risks associated with the chemicals used recommends that adults supervise the children.

The kit contains a tin of casting resin, hardener, three dispensers of resin, small foil pie dishes, a wide beaker and three other plastic containers that must be moulded. There are also shells, sea horses and a piece of dried algae as specimens for embedding.

The Salter kit has five moulds of different shapes, disposable mixing containers, a small compass, a set-square, a key-ring and neck-chain in addition to resin, hardener and pigment in similar quantities to those of David's kit.

Both kits contain printed instruction sheets: David's is a double sheet of instructions that must be incomprehensible to most ten-year-olds, for instance, instruction 6: "Be aware of excessive heat formation which may cause cracking. Water cooling may reduce the danger of cracking". As the instructions

are not particularly clear, the Salter instructions are in an assembly of the accessories illustrated by instructions on the main features of the kit. The instructions are in a box and on a separate printed sheet for the farm. The instructions are easy to follow but a small number of instructions are not clear and farm using the instructions are not particularly clear.

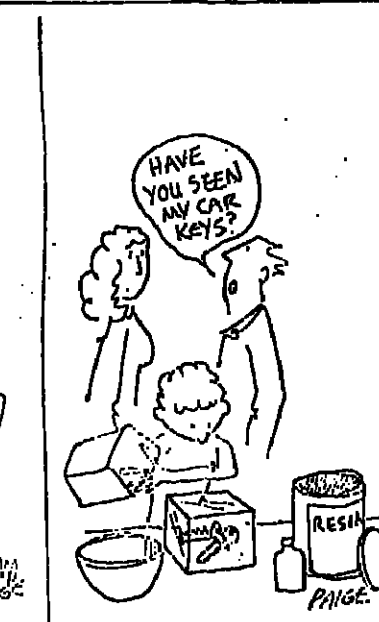
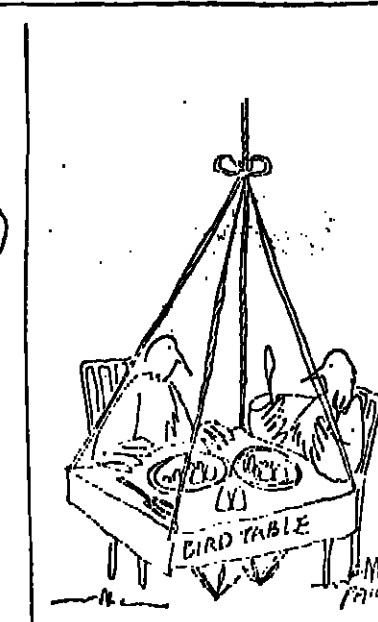
The constructed model is rigid and portable but not as easy to use as the Salter kit. The Salter kit is more flexible and the instructions are more detailed. The Salter kit is more flexible and the instructions are more detailed.

Zoo and farm are good plastic animals but the Salter kit is more flexible and the instructions are more detailed. The Salter kit is more flexible and the instructions are more detailed.

All the models are good plastic animals but the Salter kit is more flexible and the instructions are more detailed. The Salter kit is more flexible and the instructions are more detailed.

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I FOUND THAT ONE IN YOUR GREENHOUSE

two 11 volt batteries. Below stage illumination was bright enough for use, but the "light density control" beneath the microscope stage seems a pointless refinement as it made no difference at all to the brightness of the field of vision.

Above stage illumination was impossible to use. The base of the microscope is incompletely covered in foam plastic which means that the microscope is unstable and rocks in use.

Unit 1 of this laboratory has 63 experiments of which the first eight involve the use of a graticule and a micrometer. These introduce a child to the ideas of scale and magnification and the difficult exercise of moving specimens in the required direction. These graticules and micrometers are purchased from Salter for 20p and they would be useful items to have for lessons on microscope techniques.

Unit 2 has 35 experiments that introduce the cell and staining procedures. The first two experiments are on the staining of cheek cells, but as this is the first occasion that the child has come across "cells" in this kit the use of terms such as nucleus in the instructions must be confusing.

Hook's classic observations are outlined eight experiments "on" so a change in the work order could facilitate understanding. Units 3 and 4 extend the work on staining and examination of specimens: a variety of specimens is encouraged—some are provided with the unit (honey-bee, yeast and silk-worm cocoon) but others are not (groundsel and hyacinth bulbs). The manual does contain some useful experiments but others are too ambitious either because of the technique involved or the need for additional material that may be difficult for the child to obtain.

The use of a chemistry set implies more danger for the child, but it is heartening to see that the manufacturers of *Chemistry Lab* emphasize that adult supervision is essential, that safety is to the fore throughout the manual and that safety goggles are provided.

The first of the seven units covers a variety of experiments on topics such as solubility, filtration, pH, combustion and glass bending—the instructions for them are clear but tend to spoon-feed the children with ideas rather than ask questions about their observations.

For instance: "Experiment 3. Add two measures of copper sulphate to a small test-tube half-full of water. Shake up all the solid that appears or 'dissolves'. Every drop of the water is now blue. The substance on dissolving has dissolved itself throughout the water."

Adapted and used in schools.

The *Microscope Lab*, *Chemistry Lab* and *Electrical Lab* can be stored in their boxes when not in use. Unlike the other kits, however, some of the components of the *Electrical Lab* are difficult for children

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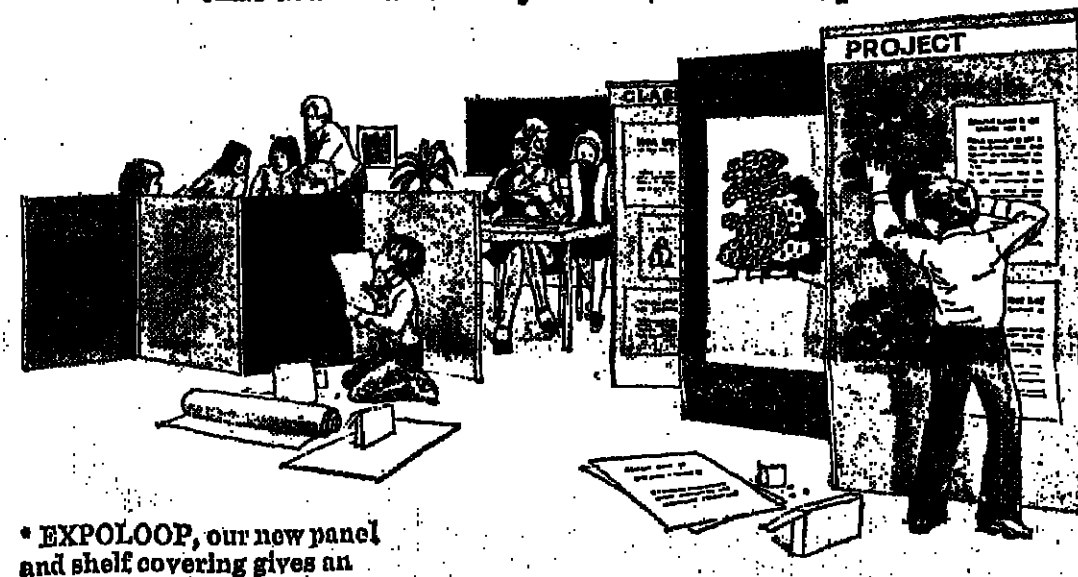
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WORTHWHILE EVALUATIONS

David Self on assessing drama lessons

It may seem patently absurd to give marks for educational drama. Not bad, Daphne, five out of 10 for creativity, five out of 10 for personal fulfilment, yet I believe that were we able to do so, the subject would have instant respectability. It would figure prominently in every timetable; aimless and unproductive lessons would be a thing of the past, and the drama specialist would seem a key figure on every staff.

The fact that educational or creative drama is still widely misunderstood or regarded with suspicion is because its benefits are so nebulous. As a recent NFER report, *Teaching and Understanding Drama*, said: "Many more teachers would incorporate it into their teaching if they were better informed about exactly how it could contribute to their pupils' learning."

Indeed, one of the commonest problems of those actually teaching educational drama is a secret uncertainty as to when "good" drama work is being achieved—never mind measuring the outcome for outsiders. If we could assess drama objectively, these worries would largely disappear. It is, perhaps, with this in mind that so many drama departments have embarked on CSE and GCE drama courses, pragmatically hoping that by making drama an "examination subject" it will gain prestige in the eyes of head teachers, colleagues, pupils and parents.

In practice, however, almost all such courses become exercises in "theatre". Even those schemes which seem to imply a certain amount of non-theatre work (improvisation, creative dance, play-making, etc.) do in fact become theatrical once they are polished for examination by an external or internal assessor.

I do not wish to criticise such courses. It is right and proper that "theatre" should have its

projects, folders and essays, he can assess the student's understanding of theatre history and texts.

It is possible, therefore, to measure progress and achievement in the theatre arts, and those parts of "drama" which approximate to theatre. This does not resolve the problem of assessing the type of drama commonly undertaken with older juniors and the lower forms of secondary schools—the type of creative movement and verbal improvisation work that exists for the sake of those involved and not for any other reason.

Now there are those who would not wish to assess this. The writers of the Schools Council Report on *Examinations in Drama* (1974) said, when referring to drama, "to examine or assess drama would imply the imposition of a structure which is not obvious or desirable."

I believe that such a view is unhelpful and not ultimately conducive to good drama work.

I take the points that the assessor will face serious problems (he may make theatrical rather than "drama" judgments, he will have trouble in evaluating individual contributions to group work, and he can make no assessment without knowing a lot about the particular pupils), but any attempt is made to surmount the problems and to assess what takes place in drama, then the subject will remain much less effective than it might be.

As a first step towards assessment, the drama teacher might do well to subdivide his lessons into those which are teacher motivated in order to explore an issue or situation and those which are exercises in creativity, invention, and personal and social education.

The value and outcome of the first group may be assessed fairly and objectively in subsequent lessons in other subjects. In geography, history, in religious education and in literature we can measure

of drama lesson is more difficult but not impossible. Provided we know our pupils and are clear about the aims of a particular exercise, it is possible to note the degree to which individual pupils are involved in and contributing to decision-making and group work, the degree to which they respond to new ideas and "unrehearsed" developments, their tolerance of others, their ability to take on the role of "leader" and their readiness to submit to others when they are leaders, and their ability to concentrate.

As they gain confidence in drama work, it will become possible to introduce cassette recorders into improvisations and so preserve a record of language use for future comparison. Later, as groups begin to show their work to others, it will become easier to note the extent to which individuals are developing self-assurance, confidence, physical coordination, sympathy to others, the ability to

cooperate within a group, and all the other traditional benefits of creative drama.

All this may seem demanding on the teacher. It is. But until the teacher is prepared to "log" the effectiveness of his lessons and the progress of individual pupils, drama may well remain a largely unexplored (albeit pleasurable) activity.

What I have suggested is not scientific, nor is it truly objective, but then neither is much of the assessment that takes place in school.

Thankfully, there are no class ways of measuring "personality growth" or social well-being, the time has come when drama specialists must attempt to demonstrate that their subject has great aims and standards and that its pupils can make progress.

Simply because the teacher does not wish to give Daphne eight out of ten for drama, he is not short of the need to note what she achieves.

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2—Highly controlled, orderly, but with considerable opportunity for children to initiate their own activities.

3—Cold, unfriendly, emphasis on large group teaching, moderately permissive.

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Classroom characteristics

Vincent Rogers

Given the stir caused by Neville Bennett's study, *Teaching Styles and Pupil Progress*, the recent publication of Solomon and Kendall's study in the United States should be of unusual interest and relevance to British readers. Its findings are both in agreement and in conflict with Bennett's results, and

Pupil choice in CSE English

Chris Woodhead

Is literature the essential core of English as a discipline, with each work a unique statement to be explored in all its complexity in its own terms? Or do we use literature as a quarry with which to enrich our thematic curricula? What does it mean at O level, or more problematic, at CSE level, to study an individual work?

Some would argue for the great benefits to be gained from immersing the 15 or 16-year-old in, say, the poetic and psychological subtleties of *Macbeth*, others feel such a programme can only result in memorization of teacher-given facts that is meaningless for the student in any personal terms.

The system of a single two or three hour paper in which the candidate has to write from memory about the works studied over perhaps two years is the immediate reason given for this sense of meaninglessness of the operation.

But the question whether or not the average school leaver is intellectually or emotionally mature enough to study Shakespeare in any personally relevant way remains.

If, however, you remove the supposed objectivity of the traditional exam to substitute some form of class work, with a strong element of choice, work and of pupil organization, then the choice of books studied is not a matter of subjectivity. There is, therefore, a problem in moderating

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Cluster 2 children did best in classrooms emphasizing control, orderliness, and (paradoxically) student initiated activities.

Cluster 3 children had their activity and curiosity maximized in more permissive classrooms, while their creativity was fostered best in relatively controlled and orderly classrooms.

All children do not respond equally well to the same teachers or to the same methods. Children, too, are people, with their own personalities, preferences, tastes and learning styles. To the extent that the Solomon-Kendall study supports that rather obvious observation, it is of value.

But it would be dangerous to go beyond this conclusion when one looks critically at the data methodology and conclusions. Some of the weaknesses are similar to those I pointed out when reviewing Neville Bennett's study—a reliance on paper and pencil tests, the acceptance of the validity of various attitude scales, the lack of accounting for dozens of variables that could well effect the results (teacher experience, for example).

Other weaknesses will have become apparent—particularly the vagueness of the language used to describe the clusters (What is a "moderately warm classroom"?) and the conflicting descriptions that occur (Classes in cluster 2 were "highly controlled", but were

also classes in which children "tended to direct their own activities").

It is possible for children to direct their own activities in an orderly and responsible atmosphere, but I do not think the meaning of "highly controlled" is made clear enough to enable us to judge the nature of the classroom described.

Educational research of this kind is still in a relatively primitive state. It would be dangerous to make significant educational changes on the basis of Solomon and Kendall's results, as, indeed, it would be dangerous to do so on the basis of Bennett's much publicized study.

I am left, nevertheless, with some support for the rather commonsense notion that it is vitally important, as a teacher, that we do not teach in the manner in which we were taught, and, more important, to be willing and able to adjust one's teaching in take into account those inevitable differences in personality and learning style that so charmingly distinguish one child from another.

Vincent Rogers is professor of education, University of Connecticut. *Individual Characteristics and Children's Performance in Varied Settings*, David Solomon and Arthur Kendall, Montgomery County Public Schools, Rockville, Maryland and The Spencer Foundation.

for literature.

As one teacher put it, we are often so pessimistic about children's potential to learn, that we deny them the opportunity to show what they can do. It is more rewarding to see a boy finishing a Topham by himself than it is to see him "listening" to a better text being read to him by the teacher. There is the element of surprise—an ex-remedial girl from the same group developed a great interest in the poetry of Vernon Scannell, a boy of fairly average ability in that of Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

Although this is the first year we have worked the syllabus, we have produced the selected works of literature. Any candidate prepared to complete the coursework was entered, and nearly 20 per cent achieved a grade one pass. This is, of course, another dilemma. An examination course might be excellent educationally, but not produce the qualifications that the candidates need to clear the next hurdle.

As regards our examination, we do not foresee any contradiction here. There might well be problems at group moderation, but the CSE system has enough checks to ensure that the different Mode 3 schemes have fair treatment.

It is a pity, perhaps, that so many GCE boards refuse when it comes to O and A level to try similar approaches. There are dangers and difficulties, but the absurdity of much that passes for the evaluation of a pupil's response to literature demands that they be overcome.

Chris Woodhead was head of English at Gifford School, Avon. He is now tutor for English in the University of Oxford Department of Educational Studies.

professional degree course; they are, however, transferable to the kind of programme being discussed here. Employers are likely to find more realism in the graduates who complete it.

If now we shall be successful in our final placement, we will not know until the first intake completes its course. It is unlikely we shall be adding significantly to the numbers of skilled scientists and technicians. We shall, however, have taken a substantial number of students, who would otherwise have been traditional arts graduates, a fair way along the road to becoming appropriately qualified for the kind of work the nation will be wanting them to do. They will be graduating in 1978 not 1982, and the experience gained through working with them will help the college to be more ready to receive differently qualified school leavers whom we have well be applying in four or five years' time.

John Barnett is principal of the College of Ripon and York St John.

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Universities and polytechnics



Photograph by Ann Taylor

Bob Hughes on making and using playgrounds
places fit for primitives

Making play work

Adventure playgrounds have existed in this country since the late 1940s. They have changed little during this period, and yet their number and the finance committed to them have risen far out of proportion to the public's understanding of them.

An adventure playground appears to be an extremely simple place, in which children behave as they always have: developing and playing. Yet for the playworker to achieve simplicity it is necessary to shirk on an immense amount of groundwork to understand the needs and motives of children at play. An adventure playground is an attempt at recreating a children's world, a place fit for primitives; not an easy task in an overcrowded, consumer society.

At its most basic, playwork is providing somewhere pleasurable and safe in which children and adults can enter their play patterns; but to achieve this the worker must rely upon a fluctuating mixture of subconscious recall, memory, preconceived bias and trial and error.

Although a relatively small number of writings on play exist, those which have struggled with the concept of adventure play seem to have failed, not because of the inadequacies of the writer, but because of the

the hollow and signals associated with normal and healthy play.

The playground, with its dust, mud, scrap-iron, colour, smoke and fire, has become a mutant, a place where natural play, with its freedom and caring, non-authoritarian relationship with the playworker, can combine to meet a variety of social and vocational needs. This is not surprising if one considers the works of Rousseau, Piaget and Froebel, who consistently wrote of the value of nature and play in the education of the individual. But it must bring into question the validity of our own concepts of schooling and vocational training.

The playground is a place where young and old alike can go for counsel, consolation and company; a refuge for the hunted and harassed child, the truant, the shoplifter and more recently the vandal.

They are often in areas of high unemployment, low incomes and high density housing, and frequently initiated and managed by local parents, who through the introduction of the playground, become more aware of their appalling conditions, and begin to agitate about them.

The successful playworker must be able to project his own memories of childhood and to accompany needs into the whole fabric

is secure and is there because it chooses to be, making secrets unnecessary.

It is in this climate that the child (or adult) will spontaneously talk of its anxieties and inadequacies. The playworker may learn in detail about the fears connected with illiteracy, inarticulacy, personal hygiene, diet, home and school. With such information, and because of his involvement with child and family alike, he may well be able to help.

Every one of us has problems, but we seem to be a nation of emotional introverts, disguising or burying rather than sharing them. But children, however well-conditioned, well-thrilled, or well-mannered, will enact in one form or another the things which worry or frustrate them through their play patterns. It is this noisy, boisterous, often bawdy behaviour which can lead casual observers to conclude that adventure playgrounds attract only problem children. This is not the case: playgrounds only attract children with problems, i.e. all sorts of children.

From the moment a child enters the playground, and until the time it leaves, the problem no longer exists; for behaviour—hyperactivity, shouting, swearing, making a mess, being destructive—which is not only unattractive but also cases encouraged as normal, and is therefore a lower-decked behaviour, is transformed into a higher-decked behaviour. This certainly helps to transform the child, but the therapeutic value of playgrounds to children classified as handicapped or mentally handicapped.

A playworker, unlike a teacher, has few problems of discipline—which is fortunate, for unlike a teacher he has no punitive powers, save exclusion from the playground. This means it is a matter of some urgency that at least an embryonic form of self-discipline is speedily shown by users of playground and workers are to survive.

For the committed workers there will be many instances when the qualities of children will amaze them. Their forgiveness seems unlimited, their love unbounding. There can be few jobs which offer the opportunity to observe day after day the wealth of caring, consideration and self-discipline which exists in the young of our species. Nevertheless, it is understandable that a teacher, daily besieged by hordes of unresponsive, aimless pupils, might view

idea of loving, caring, self-governing children with cynicism, if not contempt. Yet it is not the teacher or the pupil which makes the behaviour impossible. It is the institutions of school, and the standards which it holds should be imposed on the students by its staff, against an overwhelming tide of evidence to the contrary, which results in a lack of respect for self and each other.

The playworker's role may never be defined in the universally accepted terms of the teacher. So much of his time is spent in negative pursuits. As with many creative workers, he is frustrated, divorced, and inspired by the failures of the system. When the police are at their most repressive, when the social worker's commitment is at its most superficial, where the local school still endures on the principle of force—these are the times in which the playworker thrives.

At its most basic a playground can contain the necessary elements for a happy and formative environment in which children can develop. At its most sophisticated it can be a monitor of the successes and failures of our social and educational institutions.

It is possible that playworkers have unknowingly become the latest agents of the establishment, in its attempt to preserve dissent through delicate changes in the mechanisms of society. Nevertheless, the motives of adventure playgrounds in the past decade, the amazing popularity of the playground which demands so much from those who use it, is beyond dispute.

They have proved, and given that they are all ages and abilities and, given that they are paid for by agencies ranging from the Home Office to local education authorities, questions must be raised, in the minds of educationists and social workers alike, as to the effectiveness of traditional approaches when compared with the more libertarian attitudes of the playground.

There is no doubt, however, that as groups, and schools and social work departments find themselves increasingly incapable of dealing with the serious problems which exist for the young of our society, adventure playgrounds will come under closer scrutiny from those whose job it is to improve the value and effectiveness of our educational system.

Bob Hughes is a playworker and author of "Notes for Adventure Playworkers", available from Children and Young Workers, 16/20 Strutton Ground, London, SW1, price 40p.



Schools Prom

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